

# REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS ADDENDUM

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000 focuses on implementation, process and outcome issues. The goal of this evaluation is to examine the following key issues:

- A. Strengths and weaknesses of the program as a whole or in any of the counties;
- B. Barriers to program implementation;
- C. Barriers to program effectiveness;
- D. Suggestions for improvements in the implementation or operation of the program;
- E. Identification of specific programs which show promise in contributing to increasing the capacity, quality and effectiveness of the programs available.

The evaluation is a multi-year rigorous evaluation of the Act; therefore, we expect the research team to use multiple strategies in their analysis of the issues identified above. These include: annual population-based surveys; construction and analysis of longitudinal administrative data across relevant state and local programs; identification and collection of data on treatment providers, participants, probation, parole and the courts, and use of appropriate statistical techniques to analyze outcomes of interest (such as treatment effectiveness, impact on the treatment and criminal justice systems, and adequacy of funding). In addition, we expect the research team to use appropriate interview techniques and other qualitative research tools to construct a more robust picture of implementation, process and outcomes of this program.

Specific research questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following questions posed in three areas:

### 1. Implementation

- How well was implementation accomplished? What went particularly well, what could have been done better, and what did we learn from the process?
- What barriers were identified for expanding treatment capacity, ensuring treatment quality, and providing funding in a timely manner? Were these barriers overcome, and if so, how? How well did the counties contribute to addressing the problem of treatment service capacity and other limitations?
- What challenges were identified for developing and implementing the Act programs, and what were some of the solutions to these?
- What specific problems have state and local programs experienced during implementation and how have these been resolved or lessened?

## 2. Process

- To what extent do the funded programs test innovative services and strategies versus traditional recruitment, treatment, retention, and aftercare services?
- How well do referral and treatment entities identify the best solutions for removing barriers to retention of qualified participants?
- What efforts are counties making to increase capacity, quality and services for program participants?
- How effective are strategies to move eligible participants into the treatment system?
- What referral methods are most successful/unsuccessful and why?
- How well are the counties doing in developing and implementing the additional treatment and other services required and funded by the Act?
- How well do these entities work together to provide effective Act services?
- What effect does the collaboration between treatment, probation, parole and the court systems have on the implementation process and program operations?
- What assessment processes do counties use to ensure that services will be an appropriate match for participants' needs?
- Are counties submitting regular reports to ADP as required?
- What variation in county programs evolved over time using Act and other funds?
- How many counties are conducting evaluations at the local level? What is the scope and nature of the local evaluation systems? How are county programs using their evaluation information?
- How did counties that developed cross-system efforts work together more effectively to improve the basic functioning of participants?
- What were the characteristics of the eligible participants who chose to, or chose not to, participate in the program?
- Of those who chose not to participate, what were the reasons why? Do these participants have identifiable characteristics that make them identifiable? Would these participants benefit from a different mix of services? What happened to these "non-participants?"
- How effective was the program in recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified providers of treatment, parole, and probation services?
- How receptive were the criminal justice system entities and the programs themselves for assisting participants to enter, remain in and complete programs?
- How effective were treatment development and utilization incentives in creating appropriate environments for successful participation?
- How well did the systems respond to the influx of new clients and the expansion required to serve them?
- Did the criminal justice or treatment systems change their practices in order to accommodate the new participants, and if so, what were these changes?

- Did district attorneys change their practices for “charging” detainees who might qualify for Proposition 36 treatment?
- Did changes in counties as a result of the Act affect the Drug Court Partnerships initiative? If so, how? Specifically, did drug courts lose support or did they change the way they managed their “clients?”
- Did the shift to the Act affect police behavior or practice in terms of how they treat those individuals detained (arrested) for drug crimes when they appeared to be eligible for Act treatment?

### 3. Outcomes

- Did county programs implemented in response to the Act succeed in achieving the goals and intent of the Act?
- Are counties and programs meeting their stated goals and objectives?
- To what extent were the Act programs successful in reducing or eliminating alcohol and other drug (AOD) use among the participants? To what extent did the Act result in changes in AOD use among participants? Did these successes translate into changes in overall AOD use?
- How effective and successful were collaboration efforts between the treatment field and probation, parole, and the courts? How successful have the state and local administrations been in meeting the goal for collaboration between treatment, probation, parole and the court systems?
- Was the funding provided by the Act sufficient to meet the increased statewide service demands on the various systems?
- Did Act-funded services have an impact on crime, incarceration costs, prison and jail construction, welfare costs, and public safety?
- What effect has the Act had on probation and parole services and on the criminal justice system as a whole?
- What effect has the Act had on treatment?
- What treatment and other services or strategies were most successful/unsuccessful for program participants and under what conditions?
- What constituted “treatment successes and failures,” and how did counties work together (collaborate) to encourage success and avoid failure?
- To what extent was the initiative successful in transitioning the Act participants into training, jobs or other aftercare services that offer employment opportunities?
- How effective were efforts to develop literacy skills?
- To what extent did the services and processes implemented as a result of the Act effect other relevant quality-of-life or well-being outcomes of individuals who received services? How did quality-of-life and well-being outcomes change for those who either did not receive or reused services developed pursuant to the Act?

## **DELIVERABLES**

Applicants are reminded that the evaluation will include the preparation of annual reports and a longitudinal report. Applicants are encouraged to submit brief descriptions of each type of report. It is expected that during the first two years the emphasis would be on implementation and process.

Secondly, applicants should describe how they would complete statewide analyses. Specifically, this might propose whether all counties would be studied equally intensively, or whether counties would be “layered” for varying degrees of study. This would drive the kinds of data collection, surveys and interviews planned. For example, an all-county survey may vary in emphasis from one year to the next based on feedback (from ADP and the evaluation advisory group), and more intensive surveys and extensive on-site interviews may be planned in the focus counties.

## **BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS**

This is not an open competition. Proposals are invited only from public universities within California. Faculty and staff who will perform the work must have knowledge and experience in the following areas in order to conduct the Act evaluation:

- Experience in conducting large-scale social science field research, including study design, sample design, data collection, qualitative research techniques, use of administrative records and record systems, database management, appropriate statistical tools, observation of program processes, data analysis and reporting.
- Good working knowledge of the AOD field’s service system.
- Good working knowledge of the criminal justice system, particularly sentencing laws pertaining to AOD offenders, probation and parole systems, processes and services.
- Knowledge of AOD, criminal justice, and other related administrative and outcome data systems; and experience with creating and analyzing linked cross-system and longitudinal databases.
- Demonstrated ability and experience collaborating with multiple state and county organizations and with an advisory team of subject matter experts.
- Demonstrated experience conducting evaluation research studies, which focus on identifying programmatic costs and benefits.